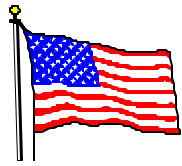




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BUY AMERICAN--WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?



Occasionally you may hear references to “the Buy American rule” in relation to school breakfast and lunch programs. Are you wondering exactly what this requirement is? This refers to the requirement in federal law and the lunch program regulations that schools must purchase American products for use in the school meals programs.

The USDA reminds us that the law and federal regulations state that: When purchasing food products¹ using Federal funds, recipient agencies² shall, whenever possible, purchase only food products that are produced in the United States.

Exceptions to the “Buy American” requirement are allowed when:

- the recipients have unusual or ethnic food preferences that can only be met through purchases of products not produced in the United States
- the product is not produced or manufactured in the U.S. in sufficient quantities of a satisfactory quality
- the cost of the domestically produced food products is significantly higher than foreign products.

¹ The term “food product” refers to both manufactured and unmanufactured food products.

² Examples of recipient agencies include schools that participate in the national School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program and day cares that participate in the CACFP program.